

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2484

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS, XF

SUBJ: MEDIA COMMENTARY ON US-ISRAELI RELATIONS

1. PURPORTED "CRISIS" IN US-ISRAELI RELATIONS IS THEME OF EXTENSIVE COMMENTARY BY ISRAELI PRESS APRIL 26. FLURRY OF PRESS EXCITEMENT, IN RATHER UNREFLECTIVE INSTANT RESPONSE TO EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS, FOCUSES ON A) US VOTE ON RESOLUTION IN SECURITY COUNCIL RE LEBANESE COMPLAINT, B) PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT RE DEVELOPMENT AID FOR EGYPT, C) SPECULATION ABOUT POSSIBLE US ECONOMIC AID TO SYRIA AND D) ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIMITATION OF GRANT PORTION OF MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL TO ONE BILLION DOLLARS. THRUST OF PRESS COMMENT IS TO RAISE SPECTER OF SUDDEN CRISIS IN US-ISRAELI RELATIONS AS BY-PRODUCT OF NEW EVEOLVING US POLICY TOWARD ARAB WORLD.

2. HOWEVER, ISRAELI RADIO APRIL 26 AFTERNOON NEWS PROGRAM IN EXTENDED COMMENTARY DOWNPLAYED IMPLICATIONS OF ABOVE-NOTED DEVELOPMENTS AND CONCLUDED THAT IT IS DECIDEDLY PREMATURE FOR ANY CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLE CHANGE IN US-ISRAELI RELATIONS.

3. MAIN POINTS MADE BY KOL ISRAEL COMMENTATOR ARE AS FOLLOWS: A) NOTING THAT AMBASSADOR SCALI HAD INFORMED AMBASSADOR TEHOAH THAT US VOTE IN SECURITY COUNCIL DID NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN

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US POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL, COMMENTATOR NOTED THAT SINGLE VOTE IN UNSC

DID NOT CONSTITUTE A CRISIS IN US-ISRAELI RELATIONS, AND THAT ISRAEL MUST ADOPT A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE; B) US-EGYPTIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, SYMBOLIZED BY PRESIDENT'S RECENT MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR CHORBAL AND DECISION TO SEEK \$250 MILLION GRANT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HAD POSITIVE ASPECT FROM ISRAELI VIEWPOINT, SINCE EGYPT WAS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN EFFORT TO CONVINCE SYRIA TO CONCLUDE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL; C) SIGNIFICANCE OF US GRANT OF ONE BILLION DOLLAR MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE DOWNGRADED. MOREOVER, SECRETARY HAD PROMISED TO GET THIS DECISION MADE BEFORE START OF HIS UPCOMING TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST, AND HE HAD KEPT HIS WORD.

4. IN CONCLUSION, ISRAELI RADIO COMMENTATOR SAID THAT ON BALANCE, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WERE NOT WHOLLY NEGATIVE FROM ISRAELI VIEWPOINT AND CERTAINLY DID NOT MERIT HYSTERICAL OVER-REACTION. IN ANY CASE IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT TO PLACE NATURE OF US-ISRAELI RELATIONS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS, SINCE ISRAELI LEADERS WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS DIRECTLY WITH SECRETARY.

5. COMMENT: BASED ON COMMENTS MADE TO US TODAY BY EVRON (MFA), FOREIGN MINISTRY IS SOURCE OF ISRAELI RADIO ANALYSIS, REFLECTING FACT THAT AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF THE GOI ARE CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPING PESSIMISTIC, NEGATIVE PUBLIC MOOD RE US-ISRAELI RELATIONS AT THIS SENSITIVE AND CRUCIAL TIME. ISRAELI AUTHORITIES ARE MOST UNHAPPY WITH US VOTE IN SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT ALSO ARE CONCERNED TO PREVENT EMERGENCE OF ANTI-AMERICAN REACTIONS AMONG ISRAELI PUBLIC.

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